

THE NEW STATE LIBRARY

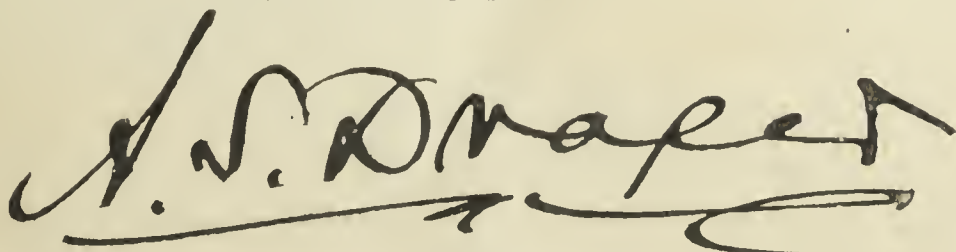
STATE OF NEW YORK  
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

*Albany, April 8, 1911.*

*To All Concerned in the Intellectual Progress of New York:*

The State Library which has been all but destroyed by fire was the great instrument of the intellectual and moral culture of the State. Its collections related to every subject and reached out to every moral, professional, commercial and industrial interest of the Commonwealth. Its law library was beyond the ordinary: it provided what ordinary law libraries could not furnish. So with its medical, technological, geneological, theological, educational and other collections. Its books were sent not only to all manner of organizations engaged in culturing study, but freely to individuals in every town in the State. All this is paralyzed and completely stopped. Yet we are not dismayed. We will gather up the ruins and cherish and make the most of them; and we will lay broader and stronger foundations and erect a superstructure on nobler and richer lines than the old Library had. The only condition about this is definite assurance in legal form from the Legislature that we may count upon not less than a million dollars in the next two years for the purpose. We want to go into the markets of the world and take advantage of the numberless opportunities that are opening to us. We can spend more than that amount of money wisely and prudently in that time and we pledge diligence, discretion and sound judgment to the execution of the sacred trust. Governor Dix has been an inspiration to us. But all responsible for the State government, particularly the members of the Legislature, ought to have an immediate and decisive expression of the expectations of all who are concerned about the intellectual and moral progress of the State and who have unfaltering pride in the strength and power of the State. Will you not kindly read the attached expressions of the Board of Regents to Governor Dix, and his reply, and then exert your influence in the most effectual way to have all in authority see what the intelligence and courage of the State will expect in this behalf and without delay.

Very sincerely yours

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'A. S. D. Maper', with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish underneath.

*Commissioner of Education*

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE STATE BOARD OF REGENTS

The members of the Board of Regents met in informal conference at the Ten Eyck hotel in the City of Albany on Wednesday evening, April 5th, and the next morning at 9.30 called upon Governor Dix at the executive chamber by appointment. Vice chancellor St Clair McKelway opened the subject by appropriate remarks, and asked Regent Pliny T. Sexton to speak for the Board.

Regent Sexton said

*Governor Dix:*

Even as children take their troubles to a kind parent, confident of sympathy and succor, so to you, Governor, who stand in such parental relation to the people of this State, the Regents of the University today bring the great grief which is so oppressing them and those whom they would dutifully represent.

The burning of our beloved, beautiful State Library has deeply distressed every one, and we would be in the gloom of darkest, unending night, but for the hopes which we have that from and through you, and those with whom you are in official, cooperative association, there may come redeeming relief from this great affliction which has fallen upon our Commonwealth.

In its magnitude and totality, the destruction of the great Library of the State of New York is unparalleled. If it had occurred in the early ages of civilization, when means for restoration were scant, it would have come down in history as one of the most deplorable events of all time.

But, happily, if there can be any happiness in such a situation — and there is — in all time there has never before been a people so fortunately circumstanced as is ours, in numerical and endowed strength, to bear and recover from such a great loss as that which we are contemplating; and for quick accomplishment of such recovery we feel that we only need such leadership, Governor, as you can give, and which we confidently believe you will gladly give in pointing the way and marshalling therefor sufficient of our more than abundant material resources.

Nor could anything give your administration more enduring and justly accrediting, monumental fame, than to have it known in history as the restorer and upbuilder of a suitable, great central Library worthy of this, the greatest of American states. With such glory, the Regents of the University hope to have some association;



and thinking such thoughts as I have spoken — which feed consoling hopes — they have prepared for presentation to you, and through you to the Legislature, a memorial which, as chairman of the Regents special committee, I have been directed to lay in your hand, and which, with your permission, I will now read.

The Regents of the University, in conference meeting assembled on April 5, 1911, unanimously adopted the following memorial:

*To the Governor and Legislature of the State of New York:*

The burning of the State Library seemed at first an overwhelming calamity; and such it is in its destruction of irreplaceable public records and unique treasures, of priceless historical value.

But the havoc wrought in the Library, as a whole, should not be regarded as an irreparable disaster. Great as is the loss, it should not be permitted to cause acquiescing despondence.

The Library had become one of the greatest in the world, in its equipment and in its usefulness to the people of this State, reaching out in its beneficence to all parts of our Commonwealth, making available to all its rich stores of knowledge and affording most helpful facilities for research and instruction. Its usefulness was continually expanding, and would have continued to grow; nor need that long be hindered.

Attacked with the courage and devotion already active in those directly associated with the Library, and aided by such adequate appropriations as the Legislature will be generally expected to make, in the present emergency, there may be quickly reared from and upon the ashes of the cherished old stores of books a greater State Library, even more worthy of the wealth, supremacy, and status in the educational world, of the Empire State, and even more comprehensive and potentially useful, than it is likely that the old Library would have become in the same time.

To such end and that it may be reached at the earliest possible day, the Regents of the University respectfully advise and earnestly request immediate, sufficient, sanctioning appropriations.

Governor Dix's remarks in reply to the State Board of Regents:

*Members of the Board of Regents, and Commissioner Draper:*

*Gentlemen:*

It is true that the burning of the State Library is a loss to the State that can not be measured in figures; in fact it is a national loss as well, for the State possessed one of the most important



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libraries in this country. But we must meet that loss in a large way by gathering together the fragments of the valuable manuscripts and volumes which can be repaired; and as soon as possible I want you to understand, and through you the citizens of this State, that with the tremendous resources and importance of this State, there shall be gathered together a library replete with volumes, so that the important work so successfully carried on through Commissioner Draper may be continued, and that with your advice and cooperation there may be worked out a plan whereby this will be accomplished expeditiously, economically and permanently. Every possible effort will be used to have the new Education Building completed in order that the new State Library may be housed, we hope, in a permanent home well safeguarded; and I trust that the good citizens of this State who have documents that can be used for the public benefit will advise the librarian and thus enable him to obtain information that will be of service to students of history and to those who are studying in our public schools.

We must repair this great loss to the State as promptly as possible; and I want to assure you of my assistance that this may be accomplished in the least possible time. I trust that the Legislature will arrange for funds applicable for this purpose, so that advantage may be taken of sales of books from time to time, thus enabling the State Library to take its former place among the great libraries of the world.